

I learned about the Sierra Leone crisis from concerned individuals and in my capacity as Chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee, which has oversight of refugee matters. I have spoken to Secretary of State Albright about the Sierra Leone crisis, both because of the situation of current refugees and more broadly because I believe we may have a unique opportunity to help stop the war in Sierra Leone so that more lives are not wasted or shattered and more innocent people not turned into refugees.

Over 500,000 Sierra Leonean refugees currently reside, often in conditions of incredible poverty and deprivation, outside of their country. This number includes something like 350,000 in Guinea and 182,000 in Liberia. The majority of these people have fled Sierra Leone over the past year, with over 250,000 fleeing in the past six months. All are fleeing armed conflict and civil war.

Let me briefly rehearse the events that have produced this tragic situation.

In May of 1997, the democratically elected president of Sierra Leone, President Tejan Kabbah, was overthrown in a military coup, leading to a large outflow of refugees and the evacuation of our own and other foreign embassies in the capital of Freetown. For nine months, the country was ruled by a coalition of rebel groups including the AFRC (Armed Forces Revolutionary Council) and the RUF (Revolutionary United Front). In February 1998, the West African peacekeeping force (ECOMOG, a regional force principally composed of Nigerians) secured control of Freetown and restored Kabbah to power. ECOMOG controls the area surrounding Freetown and is continuing offensives in the interior of the country to try to regain control.

Starting in February and March, rebels (also referred to as the junta) began to retaliate through a campaign of terror directed at the population. This has led to the massive exodus of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, was captured by ECOMOG and is scheduled to be tried for treason in Freetown. Last month, his second in command threatened to wipe out the remaining population if Foday Sankoh is tried. Speaking on BBC radio, he declared that, if Foday Sankoh is tried, the rebels will launch "operation spare no soul," killing "every living thing, including chickens."

His past conduct proves that his threats are not empty.

Unbelievable atrocities have been committed against the Sierra Leoneans. Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and Liberia also face severe shortages of food and medical care. Reports of violence include killings, amputations of body parts with machetes, rapes (including of young girls), and other torture. On occasion, violence has been targeted at Kabbah supporters. Some amputee victims have had notes pinned to their chests warning

Kabbah of further violence, and others are told to tell Kabbah to give them their hands back. In other cases the violence appears indiscriminate and designed to terrorize the population. Villages have been evacuated and destroyed on a large scale as Sierra Leoneans try to flee the rebels.

Mr. President, I introduced this resolution because the violence is not over. Unfortunately, it may have just begun. Fighting continues in Sierra Leone, and the refugees need help. West African states have committed their soldiers to help achieve peace in Sierra Leone. But they need logistical and other support—support we can provide without placing American lives at risk. Our leadership can make a difference here in ending the horrors in Sierra Leone and assisting the victims of war. We should not look the other way.

I thank my colleagues for their support, and I yield the floor.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UKRAINIAN FAMINE OF 1932-1933

The resolution (S. Con. Res. 122) expressing the sense of Congress that the 65th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 should serve as a reminder of the brutality of the government of the former Soviet Union's repressive policies toward the Ukrainian people was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Con. Res. 122), with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 122

Whereas this year marks the 65th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 that caused the deaths of at least 7,000,000 Ukrainians and that was covered up and officially denied by the government of the former Soviet Union;

Whereas millions of Ukrainians died, not by natural causes such as pestilence, drought, floods, or a poor harvest, but by policies designed to punish Ukraine for its aversion and opposition to the government of the former Soviet Union's oppression and imperialism, including the forced collectivization of agriculture;

Whereas when Ukraine was famine-stricken, the government of the former Soviet Union exported 1,700,000 tons of grain to the West while offers from international relief organizations to assist the starving population were rejected on the grounds that there was no famine in Ukraine and no need for the assistance;

Whereas the borders of Ukraine were tightly controlled and starving Ukrainians were not allowed to cross into Russian territory in search of bread;

Whereas in his book "The Harvest of Sorrow", British historian Robert Conquest explains, "A quarter of the rural population, men, women, and children, lay dead or dying, the rest in various stages of debilitation with no strength to bury their families or neighbors.";

Whereas the Commission on the Ukraine Famine was established on December 13, 1985, to conduct a study with the goal of expanding the world's knowledge and understanding of the famine and to expose the government of the former Soviet Union for its atrocities in the famine;

Whereas the Commission's report to Congress confirmed that the government of the former Soviet Union consciously employed the brutal policy of forced famine to repress the Ukrainian population and to oppress the Ukrainians' inviolable religious and political rights; and

Whereas the Commission on the Ukraine Famine presented 4 volumes of findings and conclusions, 10 volumes of archival material, and over 200 cassettes of testimony from famine survivors to the newly independent Government of Ukraine in 1993, during the official observances of the 60th anniversary of the Ukrainian famine in Kyiv, Ukraine: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the victims of the government of the former Soviet Union-engineered Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 be solemnly remembered on its 65th anniversary;

(2) the Congress condemns the systematic disregard for human life, human rights, human liberty, and self-determination that characterized the repressive policies of the government of the former Soviet Union during the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933;

(3) on the 65th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, in contrast to the policies of the government of the former Soviet Union, Ukraine is moving toward democracy, a free-market economy, and full respect for human rights, and it is essential that the United States continue to assist Ukraine as it proceeds down this path; and

(4) any supplemental material that will assist in the dissemination of information about the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, and thereby help to prevent similar future tragedies, be compiled and made available worldwide for the study of the devastation of the famine.

SEC. 2. TRANSMITTAL OF THE RESOLUTION.

The Secretary of the Senate shall—

(1) transmit a copy of this resolution to—

- (A) the President;
- (B) the Secretary of State; and
- (C) the co-chairs of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus; and

(2) request that the Secretary of State transmit a copy of this resolution to the Government of Ukraine.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The resolution (H. Con. Res. 185) expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recommitting the United States to the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

URGING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN RECOVERING ABDUCTED CHILDREN

The resolution (H. Con. Res. 224) urging international cooperation in recovering children abducted in the United States and taken to other countries was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.